

THE

HISTORIAN

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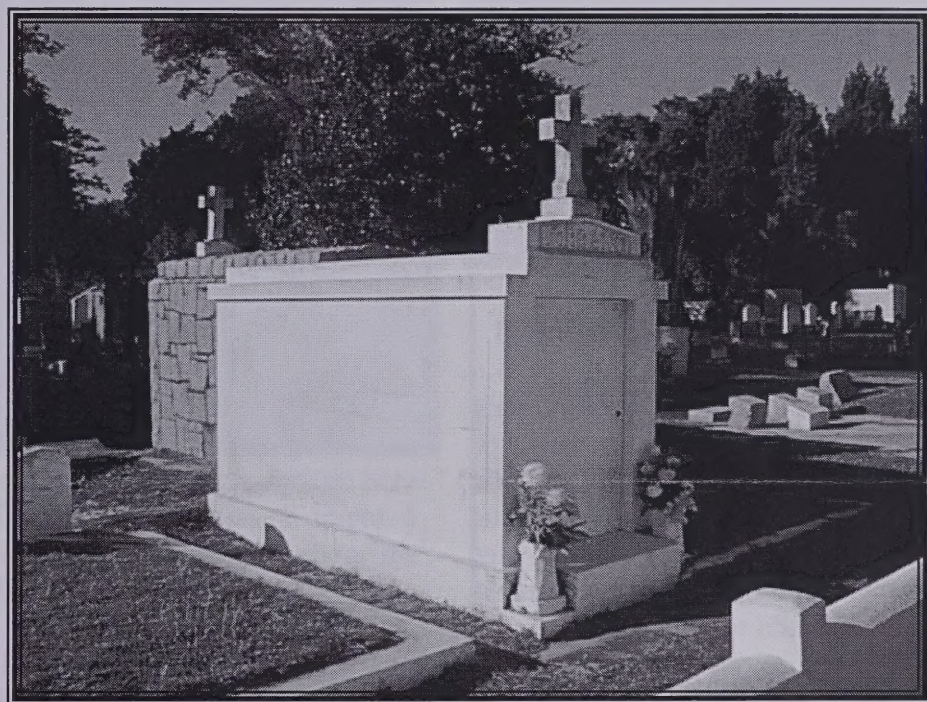
OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

November 2012

COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, November 15, 2012, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Ellis Cuevas, Publisher Emeritus of the *Sea Coast Echo*, who will present a history of the *Echo* and other newspapers of Hancock County. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, November 14**, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.



The Lobrano tomb at Cedar Rest Cemetery

It is time to elect board members to serve from January 2013 through December 2014. Final selections will be made in elections at the November meeting.

Our nominating committee will submit its recommendations, but we are also asking the general membership for nominations. If you would like to serve or to recommend someone, please call 467-4090 or nominate from the floor at the November meeting. The offices being filled this year are first vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and member-at-large. Thank you to those who served on the board during these past two years.

The Nineteenth Annual Cemetery Tour Presented by the Hancock County Historical Society

By
Eddie Coleman

The Nineteenth Annual Cemetery Tour was held from 5:30 until 8:00 P. M. at Cedar Rest Cemetery on South Second Street on October 31, 2012. Guests were greeted at the front entrance of the cemetery by

Melanie Fuchs, who handed out programs for the event. Members of the Historical Society who acted as guides led the attendees along the lighted path stopping at various grave sites as the apparitions of those long gone citizens materialized to relate events of their lives.

The night's citizens in order of appearance were Frank Lobrano, Walter J. Gex, Sr., Amanda von Gohren Gex, Annie Adam Graham, John Dambrino, Antonia Grandich, Robert Eager, William A. Dolan, Annie Avery, Ginger Burke Paradise, and John

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor
Jackie Allain, PublisherPublished monthly by the
**HANCOCK COUNTY
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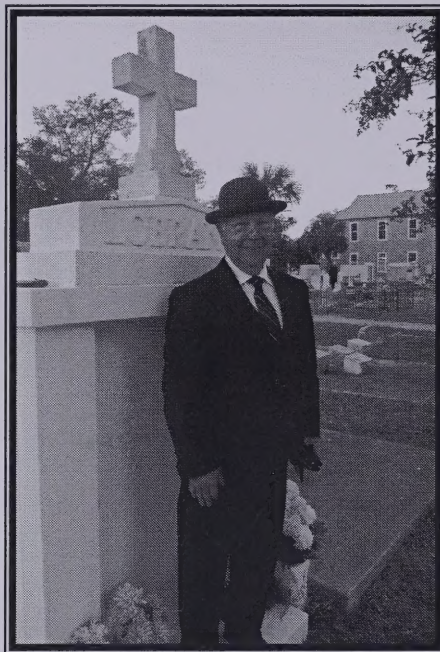
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Marianne Plum, Webmaster**LOBRANO HOUSE
HOURS**MONDAY — FRIDAY
10:00AM — 3:00PM
Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)**MISSION STATEMENT**

“TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION.”

Baptiste Toulme. Let's listen to the varied and interesting stories of their lives.

Charles Gray as
Frank Lobrano**FRANK LOBRANO
(1870-1935)**

My friends call me Frank Lobrano, but my full name was Francis Jocinto Lobrano.

I was named for my grandfather, Jocinto Lobrano, who died in New Orleans in 1880. He was born in Naples, Italy, in 1783 and was at Elba when Napoleon surrendered. He and his father became sailors, visiting New Orleans in 1809 where he joined Lafitte's band. He became a favorite officer of Jean Lafitte and served under him with General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of Chalmette in 1815 (known in history as the Battle of New Orleans). General Jackson presented one of his own swords to Jacinto in appre-

ciation of his heroic service in the battle.

I was born in 1870 and lived in Pointe a la Hache, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, where I was very active in the Democratic party, church activities, and the Knights of Columbus. I served as Clerk of Court from 1916 until my death.

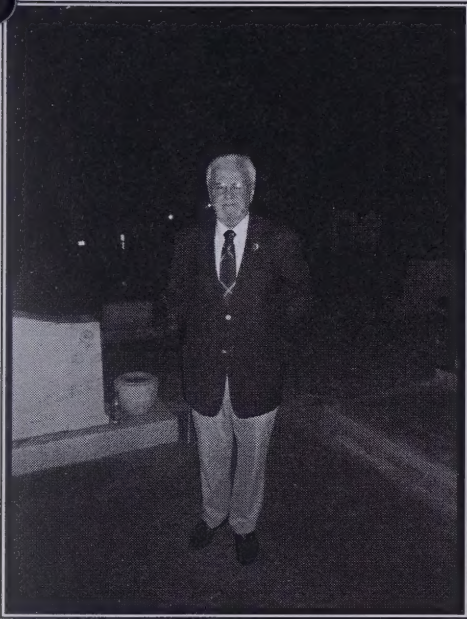
I married Kate Maynard of Bay St. Louis in 1891 with whom I had five children. In 1892, with my father-in-law, City Marshall G. W. Maynard, I purchased our family home on the corner of Main and Cue Streets for \$450.00. Two weeks later I deeded the house to my wife since I was maintaining a home and office in Plaquemines Parish. I was the founder and developer of the process of using empty oyster shells to cultivate oysters domestically in the bay bottom in Plaquemines Parish.

In 1917 Kate was stricken with skin cancer, and after exhaustive efforts failed to cure the disease, she sold the big house, retaining only the small house on Cue Street as a home for her mother, Rebecca Jane Douglas Maynard.

Kate died in 1921 and later our grandchildren donated the house to Hancock County Historical Society. It is the Society headquarters and houses hundreds of thousands of documents and photographs.

**WALTER GEX, SR.
(1878-1937)**

I am Walter Joseph Gex, Sr., and I was born on January 25, 1878. Originally from New Orleans I married Amanda von



Gordon Coleman as
Walter Gex, Sr.

throughout Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida, was a partner in the law firm of Gex & Harrison, and was a partner of Judge C. L. Waller, a federal judge, in Florida.

As of 1991 nine fourth-generation first cousins were attorneys representing almost a quarter of the Hancock County practicing legal community. In the more than twenty years since then, I would guess that there are many more.

AMANDA VON GOHREN GEX (1881-1948)

Gohren in 1901, and we had two sons and three daughters. She was the daughter of Ludvic Herman von Gohren, a prominent Bay St. Louis doctor.

I attended St. Stanislaus College and the University of Mississippi Law School and started the firm of Gex and Gex, which was located on South Beach Blvd.

In addition to being a very successful attorney, I owned a sawmill and amassed large tracts of timberland and mineral rights. Further, I was one of the main organizers of the Merchants Bank and Trust Company in 1903.

In 1907, a fire burned every building between Union Street and the L & N Railroad on Beach Boulevard except my house and the Merchants Bank.

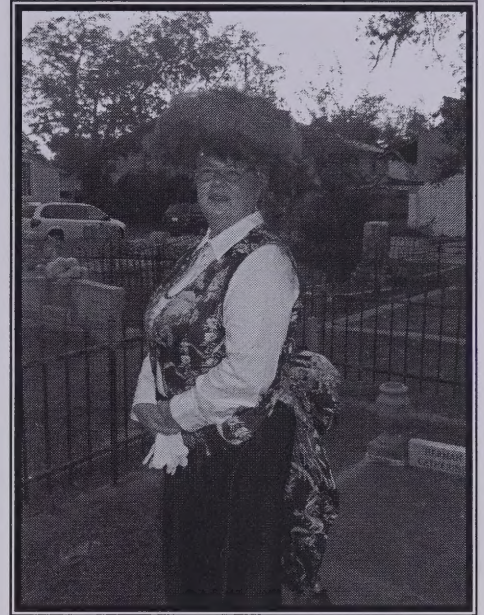
Among my other accomplishments are that I helped reorganize the Bay/Waveland Yacht Club in 1922, was well known

I am the youngest daughter of Ludvic Herman von Gohren who was a doctor here in Bay St. Louis. Tonight I would like to tell you about his life.

My father was born in 1844 in Saxony, Germany, and he came to the United States at age sixteen. However, he didn't become a citizen until October 25, 1897.

He built a health resort on the beach in Bay St. Louis, which was located on North Beach Boulevard in the general area of present-day Chapel Hill, Highway 90, and the new bridge across the Bay. Known as Villa Quisiana, the resort had several finely furnished homes, tennis courts, and croquet courts. It was visited by people from all parts of the country with health problems as well as invalids and convalescent patients.

Dr. von Gohren felt that the coastal area of Bay St. Louis was ideal for a health resort with



Joan Coleman as
Amanda von Gohren Gex

gulf breezes, clean air, good drinking water, and abundant fresh fruits and vegetables. His medical specialties were hydro- and electro-therapy treatments and anti-fat and water cures.

In addition to his medical duties my father served the city of Bay St. Louis as a councilman and alderman of the twelfth ward. His name is on the cornerstone at the old City Hall.

In 1906 my father died and was buried in the only underground crypt in Cedar Rest with a door on top which slides open.

ANNIE RICHTER ADAM GRAHAM (1906-1991)

I was born in New York City to an Austrian mother and a German father. At the age of one year and nine months I was sent to Bay St. Louis aboard the Orphan Train with the number 205 pinned to my underwear.



Ava Sevin as
Annie Richter Adam Graham

This number is the way my adoptive parents identified me when the train arrived in Bay St. Louis.

I was indentured to and later adopted by John Sherry Adam and Mary Bourgeois Adam. My family spoke French, and when I entered first grade, I could not speak English. Fortunately, my teacher taught in French. I learned English in the second grade. I attended school until the eighth grade and then went to work in the Peerless Oyster Factory.

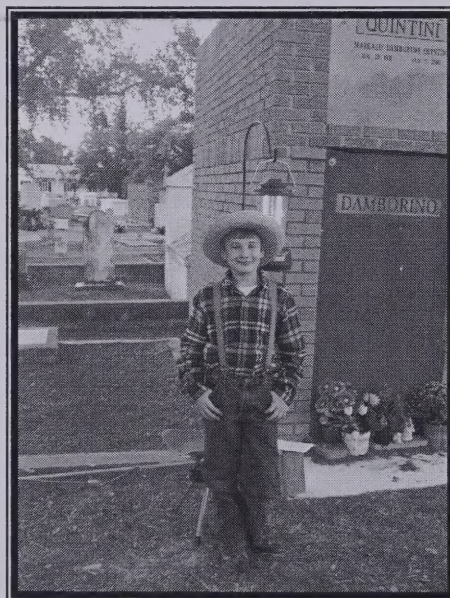
I was reared Catholic, and throughout my life, I attended daily mass at Our Lady of the Gulf. Later in my life Father Fahey of OLG helped me get a copy of my original birth certificate.

At age eighteen I went to work for the Bell Telephone Company which was located on the second floor of the *Echo* building on the beach, now North Beach Restaurant. I worked there for thirty-two years.

At the age of twenty-five, I married William Bryan Graham. Unfortunately we had no children.. When my husband went to chose a post office box for our use, he chose #205 to commemorate the number pinned to my clothes when I arrived in Bay St. Louis.

**JOHN KORCINSKY
LAWRENCE
DAMBORINO
(1906-1987)**

I am John Korcinsky Lawrence Damborino, and I was born on December 10, 1906, in New York, New York, to Annie and Michael Korcinsky, Polish immigrants who returned to Poland and left me at the New



Philip Whittmann as
John Damborino

York Foundling Hospital on January 2, 1907. The home was run by the Sisters of Charity, St. Vincent de Paul, and I remained here until I was three years old.

I was one of the first

children put on the Orphan Train which sent children from the Foundling Hospital to new homes in the western states. I was also one of the first children adopted from the train when it arrived in Bay St. Louis, MS. At first I was indentured to and then on March 12, 1910, adopted by Alex and Lena Damborino. They retained my original name and added to it so that I became John Korcinsky Lawrence Damborino.

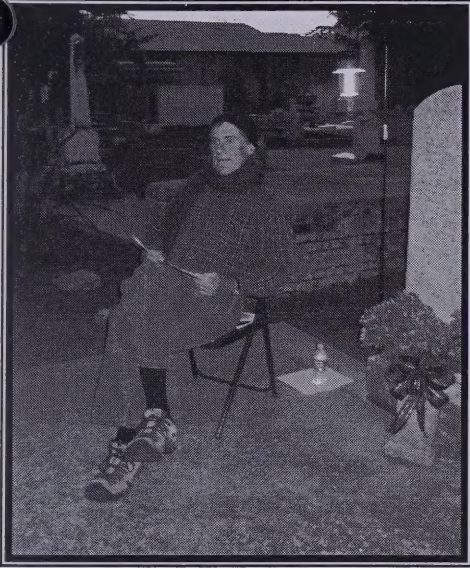
I attended elementary school at Rip's University and high school at St. Stanislaus. I enjoyed fishing and crabbing during the day and floundering at night with my father. On weekends I would sail my small boat on the Bay of St. Louis.

While I was in high school, I worked part-time at the *Sea Coast Echo* newspaper, and after completing high school, I worked at the *Echo* for twenty-eight years. Then I founded my own paper, the *Hancock County Eagle*, at which I was co-editor for twenty years until it was sold to the *Echo*.

I married Margaret Mary Heitzman, and we had two daughters. I died on my eighty-first birthday on December 10, 1987.

**ANTONIA GRANDICH
(1864-1918)**

I am Antonia Grandich. I was born in Austria in September 1864 and immigrated to the United States and Hancock County in 1882. Here I earned my living as a sailor. It was also here that I met and married Clara Covacevich, a native of the area



William Bradford as
Antonia Grandich

in 1889 when she was just sixteen.

Clara and I had nine children—all girls! Their names were Margaret Antoinette, Rita Antonita, Claire Louise, Anna Coranda, Dominica Grace, Antonia Eugenia, Catharina Victoria, Victoria Veronica, and Beatrice Lillian. All of the girls were reared Catholic, and they attended St. Joseph Chapel on Dunbar Street in Bay St. Louis with their parents.

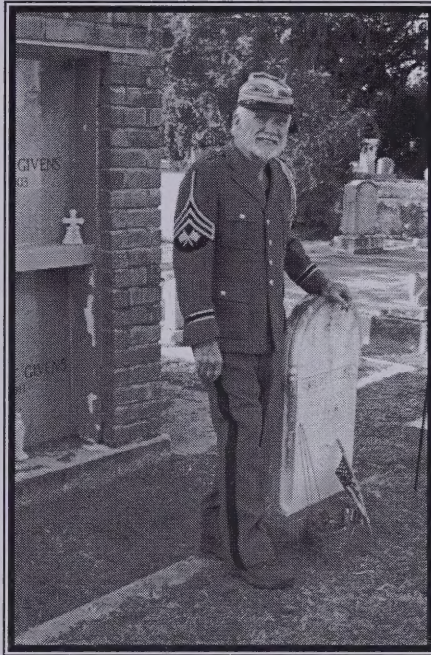
I suffered from blindness and was a victim of the influenza epidemic that killed so many residents in 1918. I died on April 9 at the age of fifty-four. My wife Clara followed me on September 4, 1923, at age fifty

ROBERT EAGER (1818-1869)

My name is Robert Eager, and my father was an Irish immigrant who came to this country in 1810. He married my mother,

Hanna, in 1814. She was of French heritage, a descendant of an old and distinguished family in Charleston, South Carolina.

I don't recall exactly



Charles Dessomes as
Robert Eager

when our family moved here to Bay St. Louis, but it was called Shieldsboro at that time. My two brothers, Charles and Fenton, and I went to school here in the Bay area.

Long ago, in February 1861, there was talk about seceding from the Union. Mr. Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, called for help to defend our way of life in the South. So, my brother Charles and I rode to Enterprise, MS, and joined the army. We were the Shieldsboro Rifles, Mounted, also known as Company F. Our unit was made up of boys from Hancock, Newton, Hines, Yazoo, Harrison, Copiah, Jackson, and Sunflower Counties in Missis-

sippi. We were a proud bunch and just wanted to beat those Yankees!

But the war was not glorious; it was hard, and many a good man died defending his beliefs.

I rode picket at Vicksburg, guarding our encampment. Just before the siege of Vicksburg, we were ordered to go east, and we chased the Union Army, led by Gen. Sherman, across Alabama and Georgia. My brother Charles was killed in battle in Gadston, AL.

As the war progressed, I was promoted to Captain of Company H, Shieldsboro Rifles, 3rd Infantry. By the end of the war, I had become a lieutenant colonel.

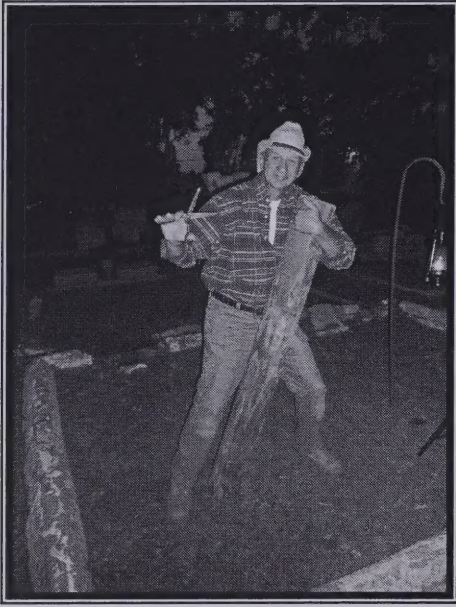
Life was really hard after the war. We had to make-do just to get by. Food was scarce especially that first year because no one had been able to plant the fields. All the livestock had been sacrificed or stolen by Yankee soldiers long ago.

Somehow, though, we pulled together, and slowly things began to get better.

THE PHANTOM BARBER (1892-1954)

Who am I? I was buried in this grave as William A. Dolan in 1954. My body was found floating in the Mississippi River attached to a creosote piling. I was the man accused in Pascagoula as "The Phantom Barber" for cutting the hair of little girls in the middle of the night, although I was tried for another crime.

I was born in New York City and had a long criminal record. I was arrested in Bay St. Louis on July 9, 1942, at the



Ron Thorp as
William A. Dolan

height of WWII and was tried, convicted, and sent to prison for ten years. After my release I lived in Bay St. Louis for a while and then disappeared. After my body was found in the Mississippi River and identified by family and friends, I was brought to Bay St. Louis for burial. I was waked for three days at home and then buried in this unmarked grave. **BUT** when my fingerprints were checked with the FBI, they proved that I was **NOT** William Dolan.

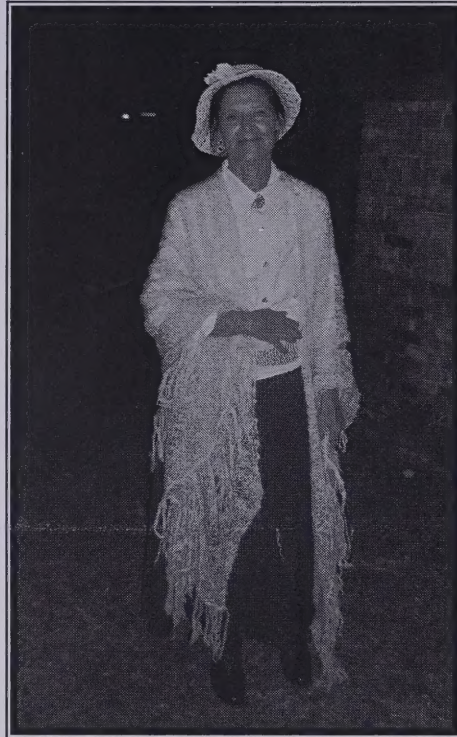
Who am I in this grave?
No one knows!
[Ed. note: A book on this subject by Sandra Moncrief will be released in the near future.]

ANNIE E. AVERY (1848-1898)

I was born in Mississippi, but I'm not certain where. I lived in New Orleans, but came to Bay St. Louis with my two daughters, Hattie and Blanche, after my hus-

band died. When I lived in New Orleans, I was the society correspondent for the *Times Democrat* and the *Daily Picayune*.

When I moved to Bay St. Louis, I continued writing and opened a newsstand called Avery's News Depot on the corner of Union and Front (Beach



Tina Richardson as
Annie E. Avery

Blvd.). I sold books, magazines, and other leading periodicals of the day.

I was also postmistress for Shieldsboro in 1875 with the post office located in my home on Union Street.

I was active in Bay St. Louis society and was a founding member of the Ladies' Minerva Aid and Mutual Association established on February 7, 1893.

In addition to my busy social schedule, I continued to maintain my store and write. Because Bay St. Louis became a fa-

vorite place for boxers, I started writing about them for the newspaper. It was quite unusual for a woman to write on this topic at the time, but I grew very knowledgeable about the subject and even wagered on fights myself. Often I won the bets!

I died at the young age of fifty, and my sister Josephine Welsh became the proprietor of my shop and ran it for many years.

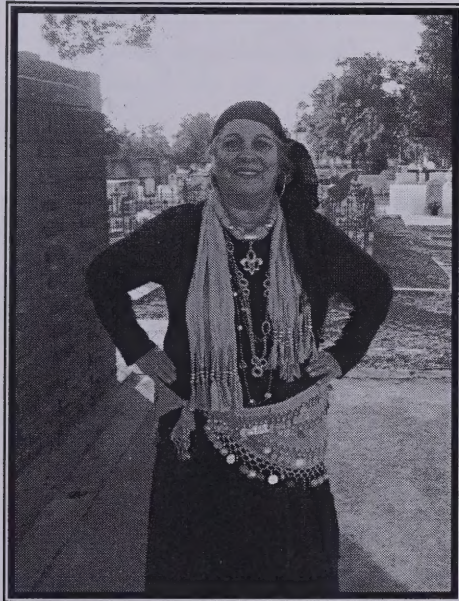
GINGER BURKE PARADISE (1924-1967)

I am Ginger Burke Paradise, the Gypsy Queen. I was born on September 27, 1924, in Fort Worth, Texas, and later married Tony Paradise of Rt. 1, Bay St. Louis.

Little is known about my life, but my death is another matter. In 1967 at age forty-three I was hospitalized in the Bay and died three days later. Because I was a gypsy queen, a large, celebratory funeral was held at the site of my burial in Cedar Rest. Unfortunately for people living today but fortunately for me, the actual site of my grave is unknown. Following gypsy custom, the grave has no identifying marks in order for the queen not to be taken from her resting place.

Also following custom, the gypsy king conducted my service, and I was buried in a robe of bright gypsy green with a wax cross in my hand and family jewelry adorning my body. In addition I was buried with a comb, a brush, work clothes (needed on the other side), and other necessities to make the trip across the River Styx.

I was buried in a Wilbert Vault—a vault fit for a queen—of ultra high-strength concrete with a reinforced bronze interior to resist corrosion. Non-gypsies and gypsies alike attended the service,



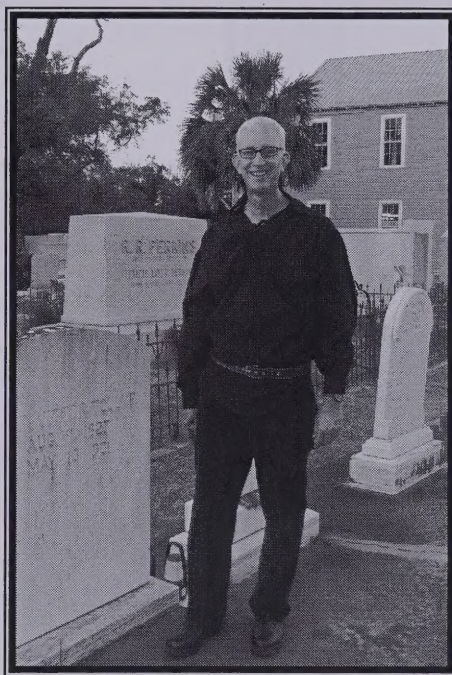
Madeleine Fulwiler as
Ginger Burke Paradise

but no pictures were allowed because the gypsies believe that pictures steal one's soul. A big celebration somewhat like a wake was held with many friends enjoying food, drink, and dancing.

JEAN BAPTISTE TOULME (1750-1831)

My name is Jean Baptiste (J. B.) Toulme. There has been some confusion concerning my name because my son was also named John (Jean) Baptiste. Through the years people have confused us and often morphed us into one person. However, we are two, father and son. I am the elder.

I was born in 1750 in Nantes, France. Because of a re-



John Gibson as
Jean Baptiste Toulme

ligious war my family emigrated from France to Santo Domingo, and I bought a coffee plantation there. My son, John Baptiste, was born in 1795 about the time of the slave uprising on the island. During the insurrection a faithful servant whispered to me that our water had been poisoned. My family, slaves, and I fled Santo Domingo and landed in Mobile where we lived for a time.

In the early 1800's we moved to Bay St. Louis. My son, J. B., was a young man when the War of 1812 moved closer to us in Bay St. Louis. He was with a group of locals gathered on the bluff at Ulman Avenue watching the British fleet passing on its way to New Orleans in late 1814. A lady visiting from Natchez shouted, "Will no one fire a shot in defense of our country?" He took his cigarette and lighted a nearby cannon. The ball landed close to the approaching British fleet, deterring it from landing here.

Later my son started the first mercantile business in the city and married Victorie Saucier in 1820. Later he built the Crescent Hotel on the beach, and with his business profits he bought tracts of land in New Orleans, Mobile, and Bay St. Louis. He also donated the first section of land for Cedar Rest Cemetery to the city as well as the land on which the Methodist Church and courthouse stand.

My son was the first postmaster of Shieldsboro, secretary of the city under the first mayor, and mayor of the city. His only son, John Victor Toulme, also served as mayor of the city.

.....

After the tour guests were invited to the Lobrano House around the corner from the cemetery for hot dogs, cookies, cupcakes, punch, and other treats.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Hancock County Historical Society would like to thank the ladies who staffed the Lobrano House: Ann Farr, Pat Fuchs, Betty Krieger, and Mary Zimmerman.

A thank you goes to the guides who led visitors through the cemetery for the tour: Scott Bagley, Eddie Coleman, Louis Fuchs, John Fulwiler, Faith Gibson, Marianne Pluim, Susan Siekmann, Norma Jean Soroe, and Jerry Zimmerman.

We would also like to thank the volunteers who helped set up the cemetery: Louis Fuchs, Melanie Fuchs, Eddie Coleman, Bet Delcuze, Robert Delcuze, and Jerry Zimmerman.

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NEW MEMBERS

Drs. Charles and Beth LaFleur
Bay St. Louis, MS

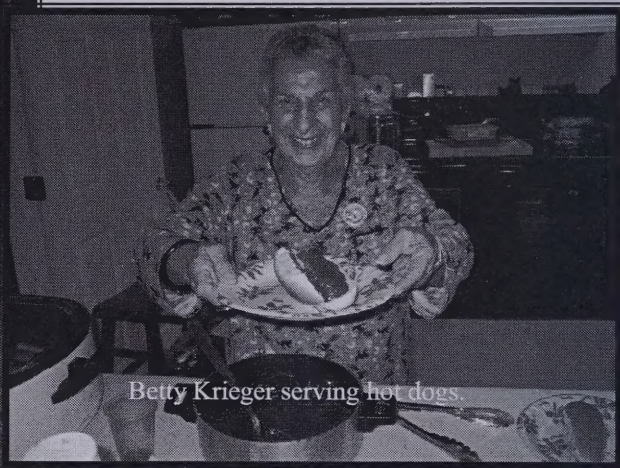
Estelle Lacoste Robinson
Diamondhead, MS



Waiting in line for the tour.



Melanie Fuchs greeting guests



Betty Krieger serving hot dogs.



Guests enjoying Joan Coleman's portrayal of Amanda von Gohren Gex

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

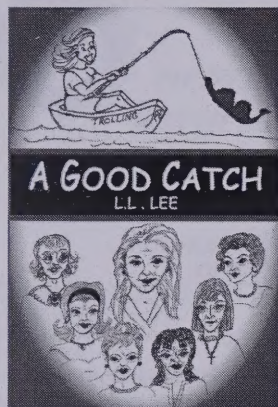
After fearing for the past seven years that the oldest deed book for Hancock County (Deed Book A) had been lost, we are happy to say that it has been recovered and we are in the process of making a synopsis of each deed. We are also in need of some help. Reading these deeds can be fun and educational. Please call the Loblano House at 467-4090 to volunteer and for further details.



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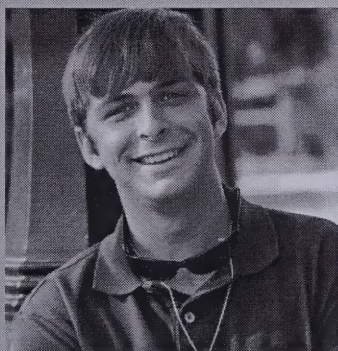
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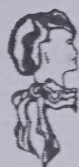
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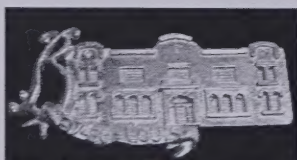
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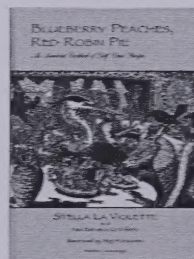
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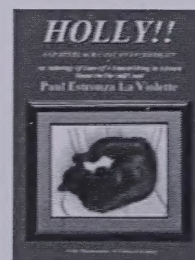
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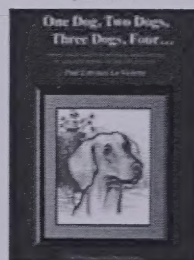
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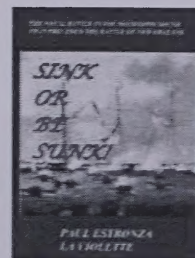
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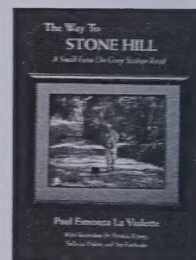
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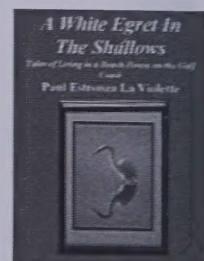
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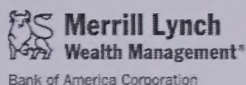


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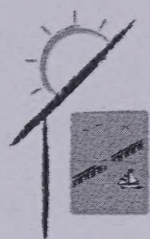
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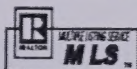
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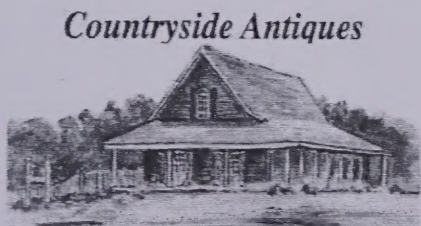
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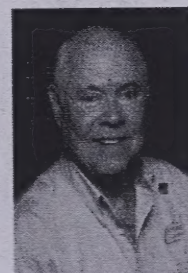
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